MHR Connections

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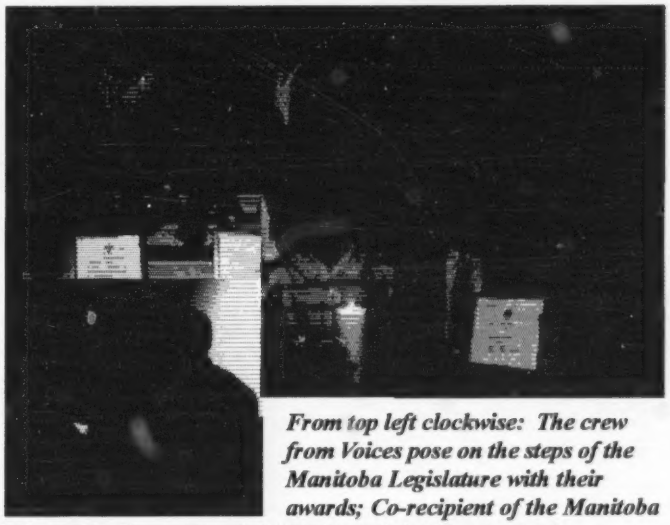
Equality of Opportunity and Freedom from Discrimination

Celebrating the 2010 Human Rights Award Recipients



From top left clockwise: The crew from Voices pose on the steps of the Manitoba Legislature with their awards; Co-recipient of the Manitoba Theatre for Young People (MTYP), Artistic Director Leslee Silverman accepts the award quoting Neil Young and "Rockin' in the Free World"; Chairperson of the Manitoba Human Rights Commission and Host of the December 8 Human Rights Reception Jerry Woods with MTYP Artisic Director Leslee Silverman and General Manager Denise Lysak; Korrdel Christian, who lit the Human Rights Day candle; and Co- recipient of the Commitment Award Ernesto Griffith with past Manitoba Human Rights Chairperson Janet Baldwin.

The Commitment Award of Manitoba was graciously received by the co-recipients at a reception at the Manitoba Legislature. This year's recipients contributed to promoting respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms in Manitoba through the Arts and in his opening remarks Jerry Woods the Chairperson of the Manitoba Human Rights Commission and host of the event said, "our arts community did not disappoint," adding, "The nominees were all so impressive - from art instructors and musicians to graphic novelists and documentary producers. I congratulate you all for promoting human rights through your endeavours."

Ernesto Griffith and Winston Moxam of Winesto Films received the award for their film, *Billy.*

In accepting the award Mr. Griffith said he was honoured. He spoke of the patience of his family during his five year labour of love. The feature film *Billy* is based on the life of Billy Beal, an Afro-Canadian who moved to Swan River, Manitoba from the United States in 1906.

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THE MANITOBA HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

LA COMMISSION DES DROITS DE LA PERSONNE DU MANITOBA

www.manitoba.ca/hrc

The Rights Connection
by Jerry Woods - Chairperson

This has been a good year for education initiatives at the Manitoba Human Rights Commission. *The Human Rights Code* states that "it is important that human rights education programs assist Manitobans to understand all their fundamental rights and freedoms, as well as their corresponding duties and responsibilities to others."

Our youth programs have become so well known across the country that the Commission was asked to present a workshop on educating youth at a recent national human rights conference.We were able to showcase our youth website "Manitoba Class Action", our Rights of Youth publications and our very successful youth conferences.

New publications also help with our education mandate. In 2010 the Manitoba Human Rights Commission was the first in the country to publish guidelines on protections from discrimination based on gender identity. Another new publication is our guidelines for parents and pregnant women. We now have 10 guidelines on various human rights topics.

Our seminars continue to attract participants, especially employers, supervisors and human resource specialists who want to put human rights policies into their workplaces. By observing trends in human rights complaints, we are able to discern what further human rights education may be required in the workplace. For example, statistics are revealing a growing number of complaints in the workplace based on mental disabilities. In 2011 we are adding a new seminar, *Accommodation of Employees with Mental Disabilities,* to our list of workshops.

All our information is on our new, redesigned website. We have added pages on how to file or respond to a complaint, and information specifically for landlords, employers and service providers. Our Public Service Announcements are also available.

These education initiatives, accomplished with dedication and a shoestring budget, will bring us closer to reaching the goal of equality of opportunity and freedom from discrimination.

As 2010 draws to a close, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate all the staff of the Manitoba Human Rights Commission, from intake, mediation and investigation to administration and education, for their outstanding work.

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In her introduction to Ernesto Griffith, Past Chairperson of the Manitoba Human Rights Board of Commissioners Janet Baldwin explained that the movie not only deals with the racism of the time, but other issues such as the suffragette movement and residential schools.

The co-recipient of the Commitment award was the Manitoba Theatre for Young People, for its impressive work of promoting human rights and social transformation for almost 30 years. Artistic Manager Leslee Silverman and General Manager Denise Lysak accepted the award. Ms Silverman described receiving a human rights award as "having a profound meaning to us."

The Sybil Shack Human Rights Youth Award went to Voices: Youth in Care for their inspiring Free Hug Day. According to the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child, children have the special right to grow up and to develop physically and spiritually in a healthy and normal way, free and with dignity. The leadership team of Jasmine Cowley and Malcolm Christian understood the breadth of that promise.

According to Marie Christian, Voices Project Leader, "Voices provides a reclaiming environment for youth-in-care like Jasmine, Malcolm, and all of the youth who've been involved in the past," adding that the congratulations the two youth leaders received at the event "will bolster them for years to come."

To check out their Free Hug Day video, please visit their website www.voices.mb.ca.

As with former years, the human rights award event is in acknowledgment of the anniversary of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which is December 10th. Traditionally before the awards are given out, a candle is lit.

Through the work of Amnesty International, the candle has become a world wide symbol for human rights. It was chosen by the founder of Amnesty International, Peter Beneson, because it brought to mind the Chinese proverb "It is better to light a candle than to curse the darkness." The Candle was lit this year by twelve year old Korrdel Christian.

The Human Rights Commitment Award of Manitoba and the Sybil Shack Human Rights Youth Award presentation is an annual event organized by the Canadian Human Rights Commission, the Manitoba Association for Rights and liberties and the Manitoba Human Rights Commission.

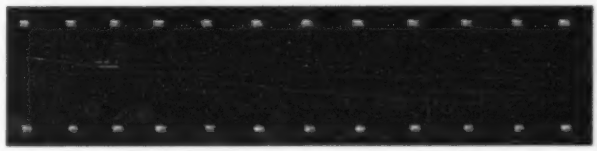
Human Rights in Canada
New Realities,
New Directions
A National Human Rights Conference
June 13 - 15, 2011 • Calgary, Alberta

The Alberta Human Rights Commission is pleased to be hosting the upcoming annual conference of the Canadian Association of Statutory Human Rights Agencies (CASHRA). The public conference will focus on the new realities and new directions related to human rights, diversity and inclusion in Canada. Organizations and individuals from across Canada who are interested in building welcoming, inclusive and discrimination-free communities and workplaces are encouraged to attend. The 2011 CASHRA Conference will be held in Calgary, Alberta from June 13th to June 15th, 2011.

CASHRA is the national association of Canada's statutory agencies charged with administering federal, provincial and territorial human rights legislation. For more information about the conference please visit: www.cashra2011.ca.

New human rights film festival comes to Winnipeg

In 2011 the Manitoba Association for Rights and Liberties (MARL) will be introducing Manitoba's newest film festival and cultural event: *The March 21st: Human Rights Film Festival.*



According to Cindy Murdoch, Executive Director of MARL, the film festival idea was developed in 2010 as a means to increase public awareness of the work needed for the elimination of social inequality and racial discrimination. She hopes to draw attention to these issues and promote discussion around them.

"The Film Festival is a great opportunity for Manitobans to celebrate and promote cultural diversity, respect and equality" she says, adding, "We are encouraging everyone, from all communities, to attend and participate."

Ms Murdoch says that most of the films will have a Manitoba connection, however, there will be a few with a broader Canadian focus.

For more information and updates on the *March 21st: Human Rights Film Festival.* please visit the Manitoba Association for Rights and Liberties' website www.marl.mb.ca.

Student Filmmaking Challenge

The Manitoba Association for Rights & Liberties also challenged Manitoba students to produce short film/video submissions for the *March 21st: Human Rights Film Festival.* Three of these student films will be selected to screen before the feature films during the festival.

Get involved!

If you are interested in Volunteering for the *The March 21st: Human Rights Film Festival*, or have further questions regarding the festival please call: 204-947-0213